



U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom Hearing

Blasphemy Laws and the Violation of International Religious Freedom

Panel



Joelle Fiss, Swiss and British, has over 20 years of work experience on [human rights and foreign policy](#)—both in the public sector and non-governmental organizations. She is currently a human rights researcher and analyst based in Geneva, as well a member of the OSCE/ODIHR Panel of experts on freedom of religion or belief. Joelle continues to work on the compelling role that religion plays in today’s world and its multifaceted effects on peace, security, conflict, human rights, society, and identity. She studied international relations at the Graduate Institute of International Studies (Geneva, Switzerland) and has also consulted for two U.N. Special Rapporteurs on freedom of religion or belief as well as the bipartisan U.S. federal agency U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. Finally, Joelle is also a member of the Geneva Parliament

and active in local politics.



Jocelyn Getgen Kestenbaum is the Associate Professor of Clinical Law at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law where she directs the Benjamin B. Ferencz Human Rights and Atrocity Prevention Clinic and the Cardozo Law Institute in Holocaust and Human Rights. In the Clinic, students gain legal skills on issues related to: the prevention of genocide and other mass atrocities; the protection of vulnerable populations, including asylum-seekers and victims of torture and sexual violence; and accountability for those responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. Getgen Kestenbaum has developed and expanded clinical projects, including in-depth fact-finding on issues of sexual and gender-based crimes, indigenous land rights, persecution as a crime against humanity, early warning risk analysis, and the implementation of blasphemy laws. She holds a JD from Cornell Law

School and an MPH from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.



Amjad Mahmood Khan is a Lecturer in Law at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Law and a founding partner at Brown, Neri, Smith & Khan LLP, where he represents both plaintiffs and defendants in a wide range of high-stakes business litigation. In addition to his litigation practice, Amjad has special expertise in asylum and refugee law, deportation defense and providing legal aid to disaster victims. Amjad was co-chair of Latham & Watkins' global human rights and refugee practice group. Amjad is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and Pacific Council on International Policy. Amjad's academic work focuses on transnational legal studies, comparative constitutional law and national security. He is a recognized expert on religious freedom in the Islamic world, and his scholarship has appeared in *Harvard International Law Journal*, *Harvard National Security Law Journal*, *Harvard Human Rights Journal* and *Richmond Journal of Global Law and Business*.



Shaan Taseer is a Pakistani anti-blasphemy laws activist and the founder of Pakistan For All, a grassroots organization that combats religious extremism within Pakistan. It aims to defend and preserve the religious and personal freedoms of every individual in Pakistan as enshrined in the constitution. Shaan is also the son of former Punjab governor Salmaan Taseer, who was killed for his public support of Asia Bibi, a woman who spent eight years on death row for alleged blasphemy.



Elizabeth O'Casey started as Director of Advocacy in January 2016, after two years heading Humanists International's delegation to the UN in Geneva. She focuses her work on the rights to freedom of thought, belief, and expression, non-discrimination and LGBTI rights, sexual and reproductive rights, the rights of the child and the rights of women, particularly in relation to religious, traditional and cultural laws and practices. Elizabeth is: a member of the OSCE Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief; a Member of the Global Steering Committee of the UN Fez Process; and a member of the Advisory Board for the EU's Global Exchange on Religion in Society. She is also Vice Chair of the UN NGO Committee on Freedom of Religion or Belief (in Geneva), an International Patron for the Pink Triangle Trust and an International Advisor at the Raif Badawi Foundation. She has a PhD in International Political Theory from the London School of Economics, where she was a Michael Leifer Scholar. She is based in Brussels.